

Il Shim 2016 graduation at the Clifton Family Church of New Jersey

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On Sunday, July 3, the Clifton Family Church of New Jersey hosted the graduation ceremony for local participants of the 2016 Il Shim program. A group of 34 young teenagers -- the children and grandchildren of longtime Unificationists -- made vows of purity in front of God, True Parents and their community.

It was a glorious ceremony. Even newcomers made comments such as, "It was such a beautiful and meaningful ceremony, I didn't realize that two hours had passed." The Clifton church was filled with more than 400 people.

The phrase Il Shim is Korean and translates as "one heart." The 10-week educational program prepares Unificationist-born children of middle-school age for the Il Shim graduation, which has the significance of a coming-of-age ceremony. The main focus of the education is making sure that young people understand the importance of maintaining their purity until marriage.



This year the Il Shim program was led by Mrs. Rany Jacob and Mrs. Naria McGee. It started on April 22 with the children and their parents attending an orientation. This helped the parents also to understand all the steps and details of the Il Shim program. Every participant attended small-group meetings and special study sessions. The small groups were led by older Unificationist-born teenagers and were held in participants' homes. All the small-group leaders were dedicated to helping their younger brothers and sisters.



As a part of the program there was a two-day sleepover workshop, which was a great experience for all. Each participant wrote a letter to their future spouse and colored a small treasure box in which to keep this letter until their Marriage Blessing. Through the special study sessions they learned the Divine Principle chapters on the Principle of Creation, the Human Fall and the Purpose of the Messiah. In addition, they learned deeply about the importance of keeping purity, resisting peer pressure, what makes the FFWPU different, and the need for a new culture.

Part of the program was a parents' education session called "Parenting Your Early Teens," in which Mrs. Jacob emphasized how precious our children are and how carefully we should raise them. She talked about the importance of being open with our children and being good role models for them. Mrs. Andria Rogers, the Blessing and Family Ministry (BFM) director for Clifton Family Church, gave a talk about the damaging effects of pornography and how we can protect our children from this danger.

Thanks to Mr. Raymond Burns, Mr. Victor Quesada, Rev. Gerry Servito and Rev. Manoj Jacob, the district pastor of District 2, who led the main classes throughout this period. Also thanks to all the volunteers who helped to make this program a success.

